



News from Holden Hall

Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

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Spring 2012

The Mill Report —Dr. Greg Adel, Professor and Department Head

As another academic year comes to a close and a new group of seniors joins the ranks of alumni, it is time once again for the latest issue of *News from Holden Hall*. The Class of 2012 was relatively small (23 graduates) compared to the classes of our recent past, but we are projecting a graduating class near 50 for 2013 and beyond that, who knows! We are experiencing record enrollment with over 180 official mining engineering undergraduates in the program and over 35 graduate students. We had over 90 students in Introduction to Mining Engineering last fall and we have over 90 that have requested this class for Fall 2012.

As you might expect, this huge increase in enrollment has stretched our resources to the breaking point. Fortunately, the College of Engineering was able to provide us with supplemental funding this past year to support additional graduate teaching assistants for our courses and to hire a part-time adjunct faculty member (Dr. Steve Keim of Marshall Miller and Associates and Class of 2008) to help us with our sophomore-level Mine Surveying class. Going forward, we have hired Dr. Nino Ripepi (Class of 1999) to join us as our ninth faculty member beginning with Fall Semester 2012. You will hear more about Dr. Ripepi in the Fall 2012 issue of *News from Holden Hall*.

In spite of the large enrollment and the subsequent increase in teaching loads, the faculty members continue to amaze me as they lead the College of Engineering in research. This year, for example, the department is on record pace to generate nearly \$800,000 per faculty member in research expenditures by the end of the fiscal year. In addition, the department produced a record 11 M.S. graduates and 4 Ph.D. graduates for a total of 15 graduate degrees during the 2011-12 academic year.

While a vibrant and growing program is important to us, we want to make sure that our current students are able to participate in the same activities that our alumni experienced in the past. In this issue of *News from Holden Hall*, you will learn about the work of Dr. Emily Sarver to ensure that students in her senior-level Mine Reclamation and Environmental Management class visit actual reclamation sites and experience the work of environmental professionals in the industry. You will also learn about her role in bringing the latest innovation in mine rescue to campus, the Alpha Natural Resources mine rescue dog. In addition, you will learn about another key member of our department family, Ms. Kathryn Dew, who was recognized as an SME Local Section Hero for all she does for the Central Appalachian Section of SME and for all she does for our students on a daily basis.

Of course, our faculty members continue to be recognized for their outstanding accomplishments. In this issue of *News from Holden Hall*, we will feature Dr. Mike Karmis who recently received the Dean's Award for Excellence in Research as a result of his efforts to establish the Appalachian Research Initiative for Environmental Science (ARIES) and for his continued work on carbon sequestration. We will also feature Dr. Jerry Luttrell who received the College of Engineering Award for Outreach Excellence as a result of the numerous short-courses he has been conducting to provide assistance in coal preparation to Alpha Natural Resources and Arch Coal. We will also highlight Jerry as the recipient of the Robert H. Richards Award, one of the highest honors given by SME in the field of mineral processing. (continued on pg. 2)



Dr. Greg Adel (l) presents Dr. Jerry Luttrell with the College of Engineering Dean's Award for Outreach Excellence (see page 3).

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We also recognize the contributions of our alumni by featuring the latest additions to our group of Distinguished Alumni, Mike Onifer (Class of 1978) and Kevin Wall (Class of 1978). With the inclusion of these inductees, our total of Distinguished Alumni is now at 56.

As always, the accomplishments of this department are a direct reflection of the financial help we receive from our alumni and corporate supporters. Those individuals and companies who support our program are acknowledged in "Thank You to Our Donors." Nearly everything we do from paying our phone bill, to running our copying machine, to supporting student field trips is paid for in part by donations, and we can't thank you all enough for this help.

Finally, we are using the latest installment of "Blast from the Past" to update you on the previous two pictures. In particular, the 1980 shot on the steps of Holden Hall generated a lot of interest, so here is our best guess at the names of nearly everyone in the picture. Please enjoy this latest edition of *News from Holden Hall*.

Dr. Greg Adel
Head, Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering
Virginia Tech

Department Awards Two New Distinguished Alumni

Two new members were welcomed to the ranks of the department's Distinguished Alumni during the 2012 Scholarship and Awards Banquet, held this past April in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Michael Onifer, Senior Vice President for Gas Operations at Consol Energy, is a 1978 graduate of Virginia Tech with a B.S. in Mining Engineering. In addition to earning his degree from Virginia Tech, Onifer completed the Harvard Business School program of management development in 2004. Onifer made his career with CONSOL Energy, having worked with the company for 34 years. Twenty-two years of that time were spent in coal operations management, and the most recent 12 years have been spent in management of CONSOL Energy's gas operations, to include Marcellus and Utica Shale production. Onifer and CONSOL Energy's Virginia gas division are recognized for their many contributions to carbon capture and storage research in Virginia's coal fields, donating the use of wells and staff time to explore these opportunities. Onifer is a member of the board of directors of the Virginia Oil and Gas Association, a board member of the Virginia Mining Institute and is an advisory board member of the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research.



Department Stonie Barker Professor, Michael Karmis, presents Mike Onifer with the Distinguished Alumnus Bronze Miner Statue award



Kevin Wall is presented with the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Dr. Michael Karmis.

Kevin F. Wall is the Executive Vice President of Operations for Natural Resource Partners, L.P. A native of Southern West Virginia's Beckley area, Wall graduated from Virginia Tech in 1978 with a B.S. in Mining Engineering and went on to earn an MBA from the Darden School at the University of Virginia in 1981. Kevin began his career as Assistant District Engineer for CSX Minerals in Huntington, WV, which served as the coal land company for CSX Inc., managing properties compiled over the years through CSX's railroad subsidiaries. In 1986, CSX sold the properties to Western Pocahontas Properties L.P., a privately owned partnership, and in 2002, Western Pocahontas, along with Arch Coal, combined properties to form Natural Resource Partners, taking that entity public. Since its inception, NRP has closed on over \$1.6 billion of acquisitions, making it one of the largest owners of mineral properties within the country, holding properties in more than 30 states. At NRP Mr. Wall oversees a staff of engineers, geologists and support personnel who manage its properties. An

alumnus of both Leadership Tri-State and Leadership WV, Kevin serves on the boards of Leadership Tri-State, of which he is a past Chairman, and the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research.

Luttrell Receives 2012 Robert H. Richards Award, Honored at Annual SME Exhibit

Gerald H. Luttrell, who holds the Massey Professorship in Virginia Tech's Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering, is the 2012 recipient of the Robert H. Richards Award from the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration.

According to the Robert H. Richards award committee, Luttrell was selected in recognition of "the significant global impact of his scientific contributions and engineering excellence for teaching, research, scholarly activity and professional service in mineral and coal processing." The Robert H. Richards Award, established in 1948 and funded by the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers (SME), recognizes achievement in any form that unmistakably furthers the art of mineral beneficiation in any of its branches. Election to this honor is by SME's Mineral and Metallurgical Processing Division executive committee. Previous recipients of the award include Virginia Tech Mining and Mineral Engineering professor Roe-Hoan Yoon, member of the National Academy of Engineering, in 2007, and a host of other distinguished individuals.



Dr. Gerald Luttrell

Luttrell earned his bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. degrees in mining engineering from Virginia Tech. He has completed projects worth over \$14 million, obtained 15 process patents and authored more than 150 scholarly publications in journals and proceedings, as well as more than 180 technical reports. His research has contributed to the development of innovative technologies for coal preparation and mineral processing.

Dean's Awards Recognize Department Faculty

Two professors from the Department of Mining & Minerals Engineering were recently honored during the 15th Annual Virginia Tech College of Engineering Dean's awards presentation and faculty reception.

Dr. Michael Karmis, Stonie Barker Professor and director of the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research (VCCER), is the 2012 recipient of the Dean's Award for Research Excellence. Dr. Karmis is a widely recognized expert in areas of rock mechanics, health and safety, carbon sequestration, sustainable development of energy processes, and decreased carbon footprints through effective coal degasification. He has written over 150 scientific papers, reports, proceedings volumes and textbooks, and he has directed 45 major research projects.



Mike Karmis (l) receives the Dean's Award for Research Excellence from Virginia Tech College of Engineering Dean Benson.

The College Award for Outreach Excellence was presented to mining and minerals engineering Massey Professor **Dr. Gerald Luttrell**. With completed projects worth over 14 million dollars, 15 process patents, more than 150 scholarly publications in journals and proceedings, and over 180 technical reports, Dr. Luttrell's research has contributed to the development of innovative technologies for coal preparation and mineral processing.

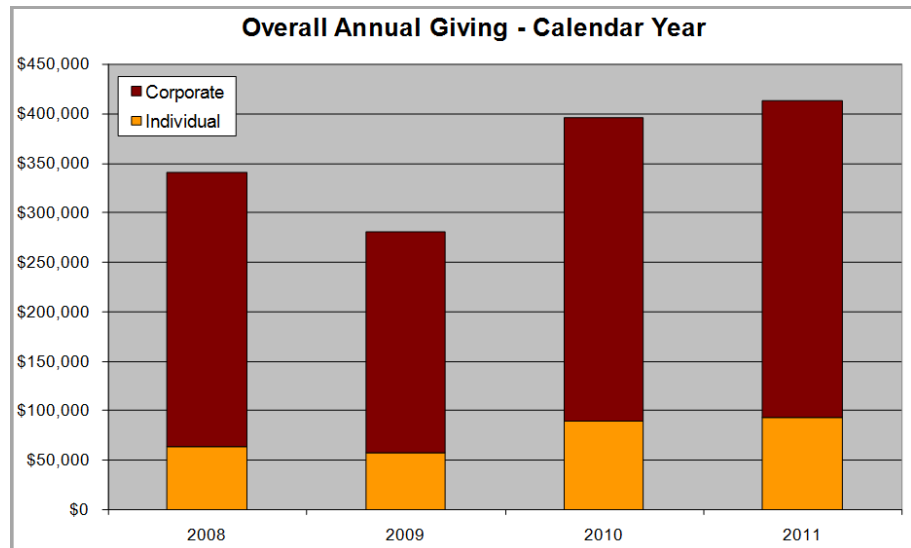
Luttrell is the previous recipient of American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers' Nicholls and Aplan awards and is recipient of the Pittsburgh Coal Mining Institute of America's Stephen McCann Educational Excellence Award. He has twice served as a Henry Krumb lecturer, and he is a five-time recipient of the department's Outstanding Faculty Award, a four-time recipient of Virginia Tech's Academy of Teaching Excellence Award and a recipient of the College of Engineering Dean's Awards for Excellence in Public Service and Outreach.

Luttrell was presented with the Robert H. Richards award during a dinner at the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration's 2012 Annual Meeting in Seattle, Wash., and he was further recognized at the Mineral and Metallurgical Processing division luncheon. The Robert H. Richards award consists of a silver vanning plaque engraved with the name of the award, the name of the recipient, and a citation of achievement. The honor is accompanied by a lecture given by Luttrell during the division's awards plenary session.

Thank You to Our Donors

As tuition increases, student numbers grow, and state support declines, we rely more and more on the generosity of our supporters to help operate this department and offset the costs to our students. We truly could not pay for our day-to-day operations or provide scholarships to our students without the help of our corporate and individual donors. Even during difficult financial times, the growth in both individual and corporate giving over the past four years has been truly impressive.

The support we receive from individuals and corporations is invaluable to us and we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the following donors for their support during calendar year 2011.



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1970's

Blevins, Carl (Class of 1975)
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 Hatfield, Dennis (Class of 1979)
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 Ross, Timothy (Class of 1976)

Smith, Bryan (Class of 1979)
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1980's

Bartkoski, Mark (Class of 1981)
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1990's

Barksdale, Drew (Class of 1998)
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2000's

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If you have donated to Virginia Tech during CY 2011 and your name is not listed above, it is possible that your donation did not come to this department. Please be sure to specify "Mining Engineering" on your check. Donations made to any other entity may go elsewhere. Likewise, if you have donated directly to the Burkhardt Mining Society or one of our other student organizations, these donations do not come through the department. Nevertheless, these donations are important to us and we thank you for helping with student activities. Finally, if you prefer to donate on-line, we have established a link on our website for giving to the Department. You can go to: <http://www.mining.vt.edu/sponsors/giving.htm> to donate on-line via credit card. Please be sure to follow the instructions provided to ensure that your gift goes to the Mining and Minerals Engineering Department.

Reclamation Class Gains Insight into Mining and the Environment

Twenty-one students from the department's "Mine Reclamation and Environmental Management" course took part in a 2-day field trip to Wise County, Va., to witness first-hand how mining companies deal with critical environmental issues. The trip was organized by Dr. Emily Sarver, who also instructs the course.

Class members learned about contemporary environmental management systems while touring active surface coal mining sites operated by Alpha Natural Resources and Red River Mining, as well as the Powell River Project. "This was the first field trip focused purely on mining and the environment and it was a great success," said Dr. Sarver. "Students quickly connected many course topics like aquatic chemistry, soil ecology, and corporate social responsibility to what we saw in the field."

Appalachian Technical Services, a regional consulting firm specializing in environmental permitting and compliance, and the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) planned and hosted activities for the trip, including presentations and field visits focused on water quality and stream protection.

"DMME showed us where older underground mining had been abandoned, but resulted in a discharge of acid mine drainage in local streams," explained senior Kyle Brashear. "Some problems facing the DMME today come from past environmental mistakes. It's no surprise that a huge emphasis is being made now to prevent future generations from conducting widespread cleanup projects."

Students were particularly impressed with the Powell River Project, a collaborative research effort between Virginia Tech, mining companies and other institutions, which conducts full-scale research on mine reclamation methods. "As an intern last summer, I saw a lot of reclaimed land, but most of it was done fairly recently," said senior Andrew Marion. "It was valuable to see an area that had been reclaimed ten or twenty years ago and observe how well the land was doing."

Powell River guide Dr. Carl Zipper, Associate Professor in Virginia Tech's Crop & Soil Environmental Sciences department, showed how current research has improved reclamation methods, as in the case of forests. "Before, it was thought that compaction of soil would prevent erosion," explained senior Clayton Fleshman, "but, through large-scale projects, it was learned that un-compacted soil actually produced less erosion and allowed trees to grow better."

Students also got to tour and dine at the Mountain Rose Vineyard, which is established on reclaimed mining land. "The rolling hills of the winery looked natural, like no mining had taken place there," described Marion. "Sites like that can change public perceptions of the mining industry and what it does to the land once they are done."

The tours gave students insight into their careers as mining engineers. "At some point I will be required to collaborate with environmental experts and regulatory agencies," noted junior Garrett Ripa. "Hopefully this collaboration will be positive, in which both the company and the regulatory agency strive for common environmental standards and goals."

Although the field trip required a lot of planning, "it was well worth the efforts," said Sarver, whose goal is to make it an integral part of future Mine Reclamation courses. "The trip really connected classroom lessons with actual mining reclamation," said senior Lauren Gully. "As a mining engineer I would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with environmental consultants and regulatory agencies because I think it is an important aspect of mining, it creates a positive image for mining when done correctly, and it is the right thing to do."



Students view an historical mining site which once contained waste material. Alpha Natural Resources has completely remediated the site to improve the quality of the watershed.



The class gathers in a pine forest at the Powell River Project, where ongoing research shows how post-mining land can be used for productive forests.



A group observes water quality problems stemming from 1950s abandoned underground mine workings. The site is being studied to develop better remediation controls.

Alpha Natural Resources Appoints Dr. Karmis Director for New Safety Foundation

Alpha Natural Resources, a leading U.S. coal producer, has named Michael Karmis, Virginia Tech's Stonie Barker Professor of Mining and Minerals Engineering, one of three directors to administer its new foundation to improve mine health and safety.

The Alpha Foundation for the Improvement of Mine Safety and Health, Inc., is a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve mine health and safety through funding projects by qualified academic institutions, not-for-profit entities, and individuals associated with those entities. Alpha will contribute a total of \$48 million to the foundation.



Dr. Michael Karmis

Karmis, world-renowned for his achievements in the interests of mine safety and health, also serves as the director of the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research, and is currently managing some \$33 million in research projects. Karmis is also the founder of the Appalachian Research Initiative for Environmental Science (ARIES), a consortium of major research universities working to address the environmental impacts of the discovery, development, production and use of energy resources in Appalachia.

In addition to Karmis, Alpha Natural Resources also appointed David Wegman, M.D., professor emeritus at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell's Department of Work Environment and adjunct professor at the Harvard School of Public Health and the University of Massachusetts Medical School, and Keith Heasley, a professor at West Virginia University's Department of Mining Engineering, as directors. All three directors are highly-qualified experts in mine health and safety and come from diverse professional and academic backgrounds. The Alpha Foundation plans to host a kick-off meeting this summer where the directors will discuss funding priorities.

Kevin Crutchfield, CEO of Alpha Natural Resources, said, "The safety of our employees is the highest value of our company, and mine safety and health is imperative to the success of our industry. We are proud to establish and fund the Alpha Foundation and also appoint three leading experts to advance its objectives. This presents a tremendous opportunity to drive the latest developments and innovation in mine safety and health to the benefit of miners around the world."

Kathryn Dew Named SME Local Section Hero

Kathryn Dew, Department Manager for the Virginia Tech mining and minerals engineering department, was recently named the November 2011 Local Section Hero by the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration (SME) for her contributions to the society's Central Appalachian Section (CAS).

SME created the Local Section Hero program to honor dedicated volunteers at the section level for their wide-reaching efforts such as recruiting members, organizing section activities, working with local SME student chapters, raising money, and providing educational outreach.

Since joining the Central Appalachian Section in 1998, Dew has played a critical role in organizing the section's two annual meetings. She is responsible for bringing mining engineering students from West Virginia University, the University of Kentucky and Virginia Tech to the meetings, and she has coordinated numerous activities that foster relationships between students and industry leaders. "Whether playing a round of golf or attending technical presentations, the students enjoy having the opportunity to gain insight into the industry and getting to meet its leaders," said Dew.



Kathryn Dew

Upon joining the mining and minerals engineering department at Virginia Tech, Dew immediately became active in the SME and has combined her activities in the society with her position as department manager to the benefit of hundreds of students. Each year Dew chaperones approximately 30 mining engineering students to the SME Annual Meeting, and she supports students with her presence at events ranging from student design to intercollegiate mining competitions.

Dew also plays a key role in coordinating yearly WAAIME scholarship interviews for Virginia Tech mining engineering students, as well as other WAAIME activities, and she has been instrumental in obtaining scholarship funds for all mining engineering students throughout the Central Appalachian section.

Miner's Best Friend

The age old adage, “a dog is man’s best friend,” takes on new meaning for the folks at Alpha Natural Resources, whose new mine rescue dog, Ginny, might just also save a miner’s life.

Students, staff and faculty from the Mining and Minerals Engineering department had an opportunity to learn more about Ginny when she and her handlers came to Blacksburg to give a presentation about Alpha Natural Resources’ Mine Rescue Dog program in April at Virginia Tech’s Whittemore Hall auditorium. The presentation was organized by Dr. Emily Sarver, who met Ginny and her handler Rick McAllister at the recent SME Annual Meeting. “Rick was very receptive to the idea of bringing Ginny to Virginia Tech,” said Sarver.

Ginny is a 48-pound, brindle-colored Dutch Shepherd, bred at a kennel that supplies some of the highest performing dogs in the world to branches of the U.S. military, law enforcement and homeland security. She is named after Virginia “Ginny” Tate Taggart, mother-in-law of Alpha National Resources CEO, Kevin Crutchfield.



Department faculty, staff and students turned out to learn more about Alpha’s Mine Rescue Dog.



Alpha’s Mine Rescue Dog Team (l-r): Bill Dotson, Rick McAllister, Ginny, Joey Kennedy, and Mike Plumley.

Ginny was accompanied by her human teammates responsible for the mine rescue dog program and her training. Rick McAllister, Director of Continuous Improvement at Alpha Natural Resources, is her handler and initiated Alpha’s rescue dog program. Her trainer, Bill Dotson, is a well-recognized canine behaviorist with expertise in developing dogs with highly specialized skills for search, rescue, recovery and human detection. Also present were members of Alpha’s Mine Rescue team, Team Captain Mike Plumley and Team Tail Captain Joey Kennedy, who have worked with Ginny in a number of training missions.

Ginny is the only dog in the world today specifically trained to perform search and rescue (SAR) in both underground and surface coal mining operations. “Until now, the only animal ever used for mine safety was a canary,” noted Mike Plumley, “but Ginny is something completely different.” Her mission is to locate missing, trapped, injured or unresponsive humans

who are in unstable conditions or confined areas. When she locates a victim, she stays at the site and barks until human help arrives.

While Ginny resides with handler Rick McAllister, she is not your typical household pet. She spends most of her time working, training or resting, and according to trainer, Bill Dotson, her breed is “fascinated, possessive, and obsessive.” Her sole ambition and greatest reward are to accomplish the tasks given to her. When called upon, Ginny and her handler can assist mine rescue personnel or law enforcement agencies during critical emergency situations. Her highly developed scent and small size make her perfect for searching large areas in a short amount of time.



Students had an opportunity to meet Ginny “in person” and ask questions of the team.

“One result of the mine rescue dog program,” explained McAllister, “is the array of new technologies being developed by mine rescue companies specifically for the dog.” When working Ginny already wears a specially designed protective vest that carries sophisticated technology such as an infrared camera and underground atmospheric detector. There is even research being done on a canine respirator.

Despite the alert demeanor and intense stance of a working dog, Ginny nevertheless showed her sweet side, capturing the hearts of students attending the presentation, who afterwards got a chance to meet and pet her as well as ask questions of her teammates.

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“Blast from the Past”

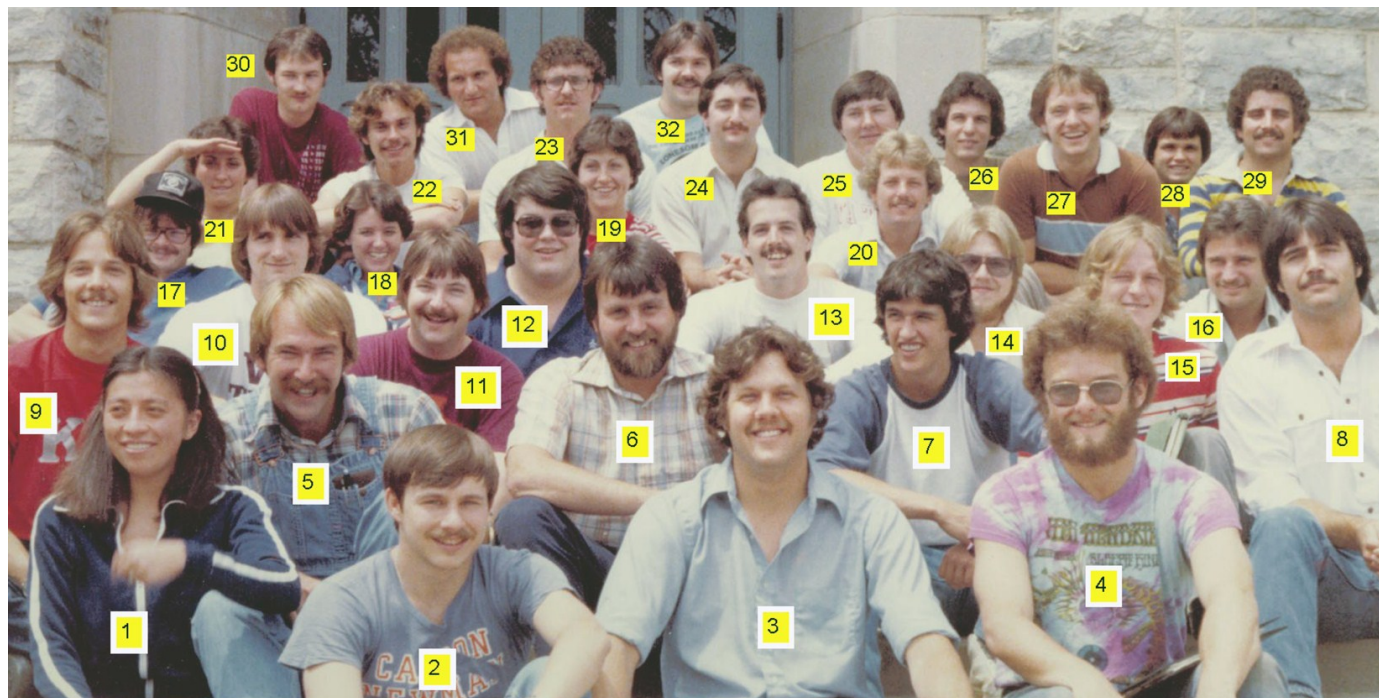
The Fall 2011 “*Blast from the Past*” was taken from the 1957 Bugle and featured members of the Burkhart Mining Society. Thanks to Hugh Lucas (1959) and David Stevens (1957) for identifying some of the members in the photo to the right.

Rather than posting a new photo, we decided to use the Spring 2012 “*Blast from the Past*” to catch up on our last two photos.

The Spring 2011 “*Blast from the Past*” featured many members of the Class of 1980 and proved to be very popular with our alumni. With additional help from Bud Clapp (1981), Richard Flippo (1981), Mike Jeglic (1980), Cameron Lynch (1980), Greg Murphy (1980), and Jim Woodruff (1982), we now have all but 7 of the 32 individuals in the picture identified.



Back Row: Unknown, Jim Brockwell, Unknown, Unknown, Stuart Price, Unknown, Unknown
Middle Row: Unknown, Unknown, Unknown, Hugh Lucas, Paul Barber, Unknown
Front Row: O.B. Bucklen, Bob Ennis, Bill Kilgore, Elmer Burgess, Curtiss Burgess



1-Matilda Roberts, 2-Bud Clapp, 3-Chuck Odenino, 4-Rick Hudson, 5-Jim Woodruff, 6-Greg Murphy, 7-Greg Halsey, 8-Mike Coleman, 9-Paul Atkinson, 10-Ross Kegan, 11-?, 12-Jim Kelly, 13-Ed Fanning, 14-15-16-?, 17-Gary Russell, 18-Helene Conroy, 19-Bonnie (Webb) Groppo, 20-Tim Arrington, 21-Patricia Wood, 22-Cameron Lynch, 23-Randy Albert, 24-?, 25-Jeff Addison, 26-?, 27-Sid Stanley, 28-?, 29-Rick Flippo, 30-Mike Willis, 31-Steve Abbatello, 32-Pat Leedy

We can continue to go to the archives of the Bugle to find pictures for this article but we would prefer to use shots taken by alumni. So, if any of you have photos from your days in the Department (particularly group shots) that you would be willing to share for use in this article, we would be happy to scan them and return them to you. Any photos that are more than twenty years old would be greatly appreciated. Please send your photos to:

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